

FY 2004/05 Budget - How to Use This Book - Volume One

The City of Scottsdale’s budget for FY 2004/05 is comprised of three volumes:

Volume One - Budget Summary includes the City Council’s Mission Statement and Broad Goals, the City Manager’s Transmittal Letters, and Adopted Financial Policies. The Five-Year Financial Plan covers the period FY 2004/05 through FY 2008/09, which forecasts results of operations by fund and incorporates the operating expenses of capital improvements for the period.

Volume Two - Program Operation Budget presents the individual programs within each department. The publication includes specific information about the program descriptions, goals and objectives, customers, partners, and staffing, along with a summary of the program operating budgets by expenditure category and the applicable funding sources.

Volume Three - Capital Improvement Plan includes the Capital Project Budget and Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) with more detailed information for each project. Projects accounted for in Enterprise funds are also included in the Capital Project Budget. Capital Project Budget funding sources are matched with budgeted expenditures. All future year operating impacts are noted in the Capital Budget and are included in the Five-Year Financial Plan.

FY 2004/05 Adopted Budget Summary - Volume One

Volume One begins with the City Manager’s Transmittal letters dated March 9 and June 8, 2004. The March 9th letter was used to transmit the City Manager’s proposed budget to City Council and highlights the prevailing economic condition under which the budget was prepared. The June 8th letter conveys the key elements of the adopted budget and the changes from the proposed budget.

The Overview section of Volume One describes in further detail the City’s budget development process, which includes the roles and responsibilities of staff in the budget development process, the budget adoption, implementation and amendment processes, the use of contingency/reserves, the basis of accounting used to prepare the budget, and the relationship of the operating budget to the capital budget. This section concludes with a summary of the City’s adopted Comprehensive Financial Policies, which are used to build the budget and manage the City’s finances.

The Fund Summaries & Five-Year Plan, Budget by Fund, and the Capital Improvement Plan sections of Volume One represent the core of the City of Scottsdale’s adopted FY 2004/05 budget. The Fund Summaries & Five-Year Plan provides a retrospective and prospective view of the City’s funds. The first part of the Budget by Fund section, entitled Legal Compliance and Financial Management, offers a brief explanation of the City’s use of fund accounting to maintain fiscal accountability. Next, a summary entitled Fund Accounting-Fund Types provides the reader with a description of the generic governmental fund types used by the City.

After an explanation of the fund types, a summary of the revenues, expenditures and fund balance by individual funds are presented. The Budget by Fund section concludes with two matrixes – 1) Program Operating Budget by Department/ Program and 2) Program Budget Relationship with Mayor and City Council’s Broad Goals. Both matrixes provide a bridge to Volume Two with specific page cross-references where the individual program information can be located.

The Capital Improvement Plan of Volume One describes the City’s Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan along with the associated operating impacts of the capital projects. This section references the reader to Volume Three for further detailed information on capital projects such as the project description, funding source(s), and geographic location.

Volume One concludes with the Appendix that provides a summary of authorized staff positions by City department and fund type, the City departmental staff support in the budget development effort, a Five-Year Debt Service Schedule, Schedule of Long-Term Debt Outstanding, and a Computation of the Legal Debt Margin as of June 30, 2004. A Glossary of terms used throughout the City’s budget is also included in this section along with the City Council’s ordinances reflecting the adoption of the City’s FY 2004/05 budget and property tax levy.

Recommended Budget Practices

The City of Scottsdale budget process incorporates the recommended practices promulgated by the National Advisory Council on State and Local Budgeting (NACSLB). Concurrently, City staff applies diligent effort into improving the process, decisions and outcomes with each new budget year.

The NACSLB was created to provide tools for governments to improve their budgeting processes and to promote their use. In fulfilling that role the NACSLB set forth a framework that has provided the context for development of a set of budget practices for state and local governments. The significance about the practices is that they represent an unprecedented cooperative effort by several organizations with diverse interests to examine and agree on key aspects of good budgeting. The NACSLB was founded by eight organizations representing elected officials, government administrators, and finance professionals at both the state and local government level.

The NACSLB's work focused on long-term financial planning and encourages governments to consider the longer consequences of actions to ensure that impacts of budget decisions are understood over a multi-year planning horizon and to assess whether program and service levels can be sustained. Practices encourage the development of organizational goals, establishment of policies and plans to achieve these goals, and allocation of resources through the budget process that are consistent with goals, policies and plans. There is also a focus on measuring performance to determine what has been accomplished with scarce government resources. The following are excerpts of the NACSLB's guiding principles and budget practice recommendations.

Budget Definition

The budget process consists of activities that encompass the development, implementation, and evaluation of a plan for the provision of services and capital assets.

A good budget process is characterized by several essential features.

- Incorporates a long-term perspective
- Establishes linkages to broad goals
- Focuses budget decisions on results and outcomes
- Involves and promotes effective communication with stakeholders
- Provides incentives to government management and employees

These key characteristics of good budgeting make clear that the budget process is not simply an exercise in balancing revenues and expenditures one year at a time, but is strategic in nature, encompassing a multi-year financial and operating plan that allocates resources on the basis of identified goals. A good budget process moves beyond the traditional concept of line-item expenditure control, providing incentives and flexibility to managers that can lead to improved program efficiency and effectiveness.

Mission of the Budget Process

The mission of the budget process is to help decision-makers make informed choices about the provision of services and capital assets and to promote stakeholder participation in the process.

Communication and involvement with citizens and other stakeholders is stressed. The broad nature of the budget mission allows issues to be addressed that have limited the success of budgeting in the past. Apathy is a serious illness of government. It is in the best interests of government to have involved stakeholders.

The term stakeholder refers to anyone affected by or who has a stake in government. This term stakeholder includes, but is not limited to: citizens, customers, elected officials, management, employees and their representatives (whether unions or other agents), businesses, vendors, other governments, and the media.

It is vital that the budget processes include diverse stakeholders. The budget process should accomplish the following:

- Involve stakeholders
- Identify stakeholder issues and concerns
- Obtain stakeholder support for the overall budgeting process
- Achieve stakeholder acceptance of decisions related to goals, services, and resource utilization
- Report to stakeholders on services and resource utilization, and serve generally to enhance the stakeholders' view of government

The importance of this aspect of the budget process cannot be overstated. Regular and frequent reporting is necessary to provide accountability, educate and inform stakeholders, and improve their confidence in the government. Communication and involvement are essential components of every aspect of the budget process.

Principles and Elements of the Budget Process

The budget process consists of four broad principles that stem from the definition and mission previously described. These principles encompass many functions that spread across a governmental organization. They reflect the fact that development of a balanced budget is a political and managerial process that also has financial and technical dimensions.

Each of the principles of the budget process incorporates components or elements that represent achievable results. These elements help translate the guiding principles into action components. Individual budgetary practices are derived from these elements and are a way to accomplish the elements. The principles and elements provide a structure to categorize budgetary practices.

- 1) Establish Broad Goals to Guide Government Decision-Making - A government should have broad goals that provide overall direction for the government and serve as a basis for decision-making.
 - a) Assess community needs, priorities, challenges and opportunities
 - b) Identify opportunities and challenges for government services, capital assets, and management
 - c) Develop and disseminate broad goals
- 2) Develop Approaches to Achieve Goals - A government should have specific policies, plans, programs, and management strategies to define how it will achieve its long-term goals.
 - a) Adopt financial policies
 - b) Develop programmatic, operating, and capital policies and plans
 - c) Develop programs and services that are consistent with policies and plans
 - d) Develop management strategies
- 3) Develop a Budget Consistent with Approaches to Achieve Goals - A financial plan and budget that moves toward achievement of goals, within the constraints of available resources, should be prepared and adopted.
 - a) Develop a process for preparing and adopting a budget
 - b) Develop and evaluate financial options
 - c) Make choices necessary to adopt a budget

4) Evaluate Performance and Make Adjustments - Program and financial performance should be continually evaluated, and adjustments made, to encourage progress toward achieving goals.

- a) Monitor, measure, and evaluate performance
- b) Make adjustments as needed

The NACSLB's work goes on to identify 59 practices to achieve the higher-level activities identified in the principles and elements of budgeting. Scottsdale's budget process attempts to incorporate all of the NACSLB's recommended practices.

Budget Roles and Responsibilities

Every City of Scottsdale employee plays a role in the City's budget — whether in its formulation, preparation, implementation, administration, or evaluation. Ultimately, of course, each general manager, through the City Manager, is accountable to the City Council for the performance of program personnel in meeting City Council's Broad Goals (see page v in the Introduction section) and specific workplan objectives within allocated resource limits.

The actual budget responsibility of the employees are identified more specifically below:

- The **Program Manager** is responsible for preparing an estimate of remaining cost requirements for the current fiscal year, projecting the base budget requirements for the next fiscal year, and developing other requests that change or revise the program so that it will be more effective, efficient, productive, and economical.
- The City departments have **Budget Liaisons** and **CIP Liaisons** that coordinate the budget within their respective departments. The Budget Liaison serves as the vital communication link between their City department and their Financial Services Department Budget Analyst on matters related to their specific operating budget. Budget Liaisons are responsible for coordinating information, checking to see if forms are completed properly, making sure that all necessary documentation is submitted, monitoring the internal review process to meet timelines, and serving as troubleshooters for problems throughout the budget process. The **CIP Liaisons** essentially serve the same role as the Budget Liaisons; however, their focus is on the coordination of capital projects and multi-year capital planning with the Financial Services Department staff. In many cases the same individual serves as both the departmental Budget Liaison and CIP Liaison. A list of Budget Liaisons and CIP Liaisons and their area of responsibility appears in the appendix, page 147.